

The Genre Of The Body Of Oral Presentations Delivered By English For Workplace Communication Students

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Abstract : This research seeks to describe the moves of the body of oral presentations delivered by UTM Students enrolled in *English for Workplace Communication*. It also aims to determine the differences between the moves found in the body of oral presentations delivered by students in Faculty of Management and Human Resources Development and those delivered by students in Faculty of Education. The techniques used for obtaining data were videotaping and transcribing the oral presentations. The instruments used were transcribed oral presentations and Seliman's (1996) checklist of moves of oral presentations. The findings of this research revealed that the students actually shared a set of similar moves in the body of their oral presentations. Differences observed were on the aspects of the utilization of moves that are unique by a certain group and the different strategies in setting the sequence of their moves. The non-linguistic differences discovered were found in the aim of presentation, knowledge on task, adequacy of information and structure of presentation.

Keyword : *English for Workplace Communication*, oral presentations

Introduction

In today's borderless world, it has become increasingly apparent that a good command in English would open many doors of opportunities. Under the current global economic situation, it is of utmost importance for us to be proficient in all aspects of English language, especially in communication. Effective communication skills, especially spoken English language certainly is an added asset for everyone especially graduates to compete with others and not being left out in the current social, academic and economic environments. OP skill is one significant component of the overall communication skills to be acquired by successful individuals.

OP plays an important role among students and working personnel alike. As stated by Seliman (1996), delivering OPs is a literacy skill in academic, business, and professional environments. Therefore, students should be trained with skills of delivering oral presentations. This is certainly crucial as having the competency of delivering OPs will certainly provide the students an edge above others in related occasions, especially when entering the work-sector.

Statement of Problem

The *body* of an OP holds the content and the gist of a presentation, and it requires to be presented effectively for it to reach its audience. However, an observed scenario among UTM students is that some of them failed to deliver effectively because of their inadequate skills of OP. Central to this is their inability to structure, present and elaborate their ideas clearly in the *body* of the presentations. Another seen problem is that, being non-native speakers, the way their ideas are presented in the *body* of the OP is sometimes affected by the style normally used in their mother-tongue. Thus, the ideas fail to reach the audience, making the presentation unsuccessful.

Therefore, this research is conducted to find out the genre of the *body* of OPs delivered by *English for Workplace Communication (UHB3022)* students. Focus will be set on investigating the pattern of moves used in the *body* of OPs by students enrolled in this course. The *body* of OPs is chosen to be studied as it is the longest part of an OP, and thus contributes to its major proportion of content and importance. Although other parts of OP such as the introduction, conclusion, and Q&A session also play a role in perfecting an OP, their roles are of less significance than the *body* of OPs. The moves, meanwhile, are studied as they signify the sequence, flow and structure of the content of the *body* itself. A thorough observation on the moves would provide valuable information on how students enrolled in this course structure and deliver their ideas in OPs.

Objective of Study

- i. To describe the moves of the *body* of OPs delivered by UTM students enrolled in UHB3022
- ii. To determine the differences between the moves found in the *body* of OPs delivered by students in FPPSM and those delivered by students in FP

Scope of Study

This research will concentrate on the analysis of the moves used in the *body* of OPs presented by UTM students enrolled in UHB3022. The introduction, termination as well as the Q&A session were not included in the analysis.

Significance of Study

The findings of this research will be significant for students preparing to present OPs both in and outside the classroom. It will provide useful insights on ways of presenting the *body* of OPs for students to follow. The findings of the research will also be beneficial for lecturers to help them design effective methods of teaching OPs for students, especially the *body*.

Research Sample and Population

The population of this research included all students enrolled in UHB 3022 offered by the Department of Modern Languages, FPPSM. However, the researcher only collected data from two classes - one class each from FP and FPPSM. From each of these classes, two groups consisting of four to five speakers were chosen. Both of these classes were taught by the same lecturer.

The number of groups to be selected was limited as transcription work will be needed for each respondent's presentation, and this would demand a long period of time to process. This was also crucial to ensure that a considerable amount of manageable data for this research could be obtained.

Students from FP and FPPSM were chosen as respondents as they are commonly involved in OPs in their present learning and will still be so in their future working context. While FPPSM students are trained to be business professionals and present effective business presentations, FP students are trained to become excellent teachers who are able to present meaningful lessons. In short, this research would be a significant yardstick to measure both group of students' OP skills, particularly in presenting the *body* of OPs, and in demonstrating how moves are used in the process.

The theme for the OPs that the students have to deliver is company presentation - one of the tasks set for students to complete in order to pass this course. This task carries twenty percent of the total coursework marks. Designed to assess students' OP skills in a workplace scenario, this task assigns students to form companies and presenting the product or service that their companies plan to offer. Students will also have to name their companies and each company will be built of four to five individuals. Below are the requirements for this task:

- i. Students are to write a brief company profile
- ii. The company will participate in a Trade Exhibition to be held at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC). Based on the company profile, students are to develop a strategy to promote their product or service at a trade presentation session. Each company or group will be given a maximum of 15 minutes to present.
- iii. Students are required to briefly introduce their company and present the products and services they offer at the presentation session.

Students are required to take note of all the other (company) presentations as this will be particularly relevant and useful for the tasks in Part 2 (Memo Writing) and Part 3 (Company Meeting).

Research Instruments

Two types of instruments were used for this study. They were transcribed *body* of OPs recorded and an OP moves checklist by Seliman (1996). Since no such research on this field has been done on students before, the OP moves checklist by Seliman (1996) on local and foreign engineering professionals served as an additional instrument for the betterment of this research.

Transcribed *Body* of OPs

For this study, the *body* of the OPs by the respondents were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were used as the main instruments in this study.

OP Moves Checklist by Seliman (1996)

The researcher used the OP moves checklist by Seliman (1996) in the data analysis stage. All the moves of the *body* of OPs identified in the research were cross-checked with those listed in the checklist. From there, the researcher was able to determine the characteristics of the moves of the *body* of OPs identified.

The Structure of Moves of the *Body* of OP

The first research question aims to discover the moves employed by students when delivering the *body* of their OPs. To attain this, an analysis was done on the transcription of the *body* of OPs done by these students.

It was observed that the moves utilized by each group of students looked similar, thus showing a shared set of moves used in the *body* of their OPs. Differences however, can still be seen in some aspects such as the utilization of moves that are unique by a group to another and the different strategies in setting the flow of their ideas.

The Structure of Moves of the *Body* of OPs Delivered by FP students

For FP students, OPs of two groups were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Below is the initial record of observation on the moves utilized by FP students in the *body* of their OPs. Each move was coded and numbered according to the group in which it was utilized. For example, moves utilized by Group A were coded with the letter A and numbered accordingly (A1, A2, A3...). This process was repeated to moves utilized by Group B as well.

Table 1 : Structure of Moves Employed by FP Students (Group A)

Group FP (A)	
Move	Description
A1	Stating intention for speech
A2	Describing service provided
A3	Giving detailed description of product/service
A4	Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided
A5	Describing sales profile/company performance
A6	Providing information on company strategy

Table 2 : Structure of Moves Employed by FP Students (Group B)

Group FP (B)	
Move	Description
B1	Stating intention for speech
B2	Describing company and service provided
B3	Explaining company structure
B4	Describing sales profile/company performance
B5	Giving detailed description of product/service
B6	Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided

Note that while Group A utilized Move A2 (*describing service provided*) to focus strictly on describing the service provided by their company, Group B chose to combine their description of service or product provided with their company description. This was shown by the utilization of Move B2 (*describing company and service provided*). Group B also employed an additional move which was not used by Group A that is Move B3 (*explaining company structure*). Nevertheless, the number of moves used by both groups was leveled as Group A utilized Move A6 (*providing information on company strategy*) that was not used by Group B in the *body* of their OP.

Another interesting observation is that both groups also sequenced the moves differently, thus showing different sequencing of ideas. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2 above, Group A started the *body* of their OP by stating their intention for speech before moving to describe their service/product, persuading audiences to use their service/product before closing by describing their sales profile or company performance. Meanwhile, Group B also began by stating their intention for speech, but continued by describing both company and service provided, explaining their company structure, describing sales profile or company performance before coming back to describing their service/product and ended the *body* of their OP by persuading audiences to use their service/product.

Table 3 : Cross-checking of Moves Utilized by FP Students

Group FP (A)	Group FP (B)	General FP
A1 - Stating intention for speech	B1 - Stating intention for speech	Stating intention for speech
A2 - Describing service provided	B2 - Describing company and service provided	Describing company and service provided
A3 - Giving detailed description of product/service	B3 - Explaining company structure	Giving detailed description of product/service
A4 - Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided	B4 - Describing sales profile/company performance	Explaining company structure
A5 - Describing sales profile/company performance	B5 - Giving detailed description of product/service	Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided
A6 - Providing information on company strategy	B6 - Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided	Describing sales profile/company performance
		Providing information on company strategy

The Structure of Moves of the *Body* of OPs Delivered by FPPSM Students

Below is the initial record of observation on moves employed by FPPSM students in the *body* of their OPs.

Table 4 : Structure of Moves Utilized by FPPSM Students (Group A)

Group FPPSM (A)	
Moves	Description
A1	Describing company and service provided
A2	Explaining company structure
A3	Giving explanation on personal role in company (x5)
A4	Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided
A5	Providing information on company strategy
A6	Stating additional relevant information

Table 5 : Structure of Moves Utilized by FPPSM Students (Group B)

Group FPPSM (B)	
Moves	Description
B1	Stating intention for speech
B2	Explaining company structure
B3	Describing company and service provided
B4	Explaining company management position and roles (x2)
B5	Giving detailed description of product/service (x2)

From Table 4 and 5 above, it can be observed that both groups of FPPSM students structured the *body* of their OPs differently as well. Both groups show variations of idea sequencing and styles of manipulating the moves. Meanwhile, similarities of the moves employed are displayed from the contents of both groups' *body* of OPs which are basically in common with one another.

To start with, a stark difference between the structures of moves employed between the two groups is the emphasis put on the presentation of personnel roles in the company. Placing a certain weight on making clear to the audience about the roles of each group member in the company, Group A chose to make the presentation of this point an individual task. Each group member introduced his/her own position and subsequently their exclusive roles in the company, causing a repetition of Move A3 (*giving explanation on personal role in company*) five times. In contrast, Group B generalized the explanation of personnel roles by not making it an individual task. Information on company personnel roles were presented by only two presenters, thus making Move B4 (*giving explanation on personal role in company*) appeared only twice.

Furthermore, the way the *body* of their OPs is presented by the two groups was also different. It should be noted that Group A started their presentation by directly informing the audience of their company and service details, as shown by the utilization of Move A1 (*describing company and service provided*). Group B meanwhile, started their presentation in a more welcoming

manner that was by explaining their reason of speech to the audience before jumping into the main ideas. This was shown from the use of Move B1 (*stating intention/reason for speech*) as their first move of the *body* of OP.

Each move in both groups was cross-checked to see whether they serve the same purpose and thus, can be generalized as the same. The same procedures whereby every keyword of the moves were bolded and compared with each other were repeated. The exact same moves were automatically accepted such as Move A2 (*Explaining company structure*) and Move B2 (*Explaining company structure*). Moves which shared a common purpose were considered as one similar move such as Move A3 (*Giving explanation on personal role in company*) and Move B4 (*Explaining company management position and roles*) while unique moves such as Move A5 (*Providing information on company strategy*) and Move B1 (*Stating intention/reason for speech*) were also reported. The result of this cross-checking were accepted as the common set of moves utilized by FPPSM students in the *body* of their OPs.

Table 6 : Cross-checking of Moves Utilized by FPPSM Students

Group FPPSM (A)	Group FPPSM (B)	FPPSM generalized
A1 - Describing company and service provided	B1 - Stating intention for speech	Stating intention/reason for speech
A2 - Explaining company structure	B2 - Explaining company structure	Describing company and service provided
A3 - Giving explanation on personal role in company (x5)	B3 - Describing company and service provided	Explaining company structure
A4 - Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided	B4 - Explaining company management position and roles (x2)	Giving explanation on personal role in company
A5 - Providing information on company strategy	B5 - Giving detailed description of product/service (x2)	Explaining company management position and roles
A6 - Stating additional relevant information		Giving reasons why audience must choose product/service provided
		Giving detailed description of product/service
		Providing information on company strategy
		Stating additional relevant information

Compilation of Moves Utilized by Both FP and FPPSM Students in the *Body* of Their Ops

Based on the findings, it was shown that the moves utilized by FP and FPPSM students were quite similar. Generally, the moves utilized by the students revolved around;

- i. Stating **intention** for speech
- ii. Describing **company** and **service** provided
- iii. Giving **detailed** description of product/**service** (sub-move)
- iv. Explaining company **structure**
- v. Giving **reasons** why audience must choose product/service provided
- vi. Describing **sales profile/company performance**
- vii. Providing information on **company strategy**

Two unique moves and a sub-move which were only utilized by the FPPSM students and not by FP students are;

- i. Stating additional relevant **information**
- ii. Explaining company **management position and roles**
- iii. Giving explanation on **personal role** in company (sub-move)

All in all, the utilization of these moves by students of FP and FPPSM signify their overall understanding of the OPs that they have presented. Common purposes or points needed in the *body* of OPs were realized by the utilization of related moves to serve them. Noting that a move is used to serve a purpose or carry an idea, it can generally be said that the *body* of OPs presented by FP and FPPSM students were rich in ideas relating to the topic of their OPs - business presentation. This was portrayed from the inclusion of crucial points related to company aspects as well as service introduction and promotion through the application of moves such as Move (*describing **company** and **service** provided*), Move (*explaining company **structure***), Move (*describing **sales profile/company performance***) and Move (*giving **reasons** why audience must choose product/service provided*).

Conclusion

The conclusions of this research are as follow;

- i. The different patterns of moves used in the *body* of OPs by the students were caused by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. These factors affected the students' style of utilizing the moves in terms of the selection of moves to be used and the decision of sequencing the moves in their OPs.
- ii. The genre of the *body* of OPs presented by FP and FPPSM students is still evolving and unstable.

If the genre of the *body* of OPs presented was stable, a uniform pattern of utilization of moves would be seen in the data collected. This however, did not happen as obvious differences in the moves used by both FP and FPPSM students' *body* of OPs were observed in the research.

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